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Fiftieth session
Agenda items 8 and 65

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

COMPREHENSIVE TEST-BAN TREATY

Letter dated 3 September 1996 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 22 August 1996 from the Australian Ambassador, Mr. Richard Butler, addressed to you, concerning resumed consideration by the General Assembly of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (A/50/1024).

As we understand it, the General Assembly is expected to meet in plenary session on 9 September 1996 to consider and take action on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, pursuant to its resolution 50/65 of 12 December 1995.

We have familiarized ourselves with the draft resolution submitted by Australia concerning the adoption of a decision on this matter. Under the decision, the General Assembly would, inter alia, adopt the aforementioned treaty and invite all States to sign it and, subsequently, become parties to it as soon as possible, in accordance with their respective constitutional procedures.

In connection with the foregoing, I should stress that the Russian Federation supports the text of the treaty as it stands. At the same time, the Russian Federation notes that the option selected for the adoption of the treaty by the General Assembly represents a departure from the existing procedure for the elaboration of multilateral agreements in the Conference on Disarmament. The Russian Federation's agreement to such a course of action is dictated by the exceptional nature of the situation that has arisen with regard to the treaty. Such a decision by the General Assembly on this matter must be without prejudice to the practice and rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament, and must not set a precedent for the work of the General Assembly or the Conference on Disarmament.

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I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 8 and 65.

(Signed) S. LAVROV